

HOUSE No. 1108

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Garrett J. Bradley

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the passage of the accompanying bill:

An Act providing free tuition to firefighters at State Universities.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Garrett J. Bradley

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

3rd Plymouth

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Nine

AN ACT PROVIDING FREE TUITION TO FIREFIGHTERS AT STATE UNIVERSITIES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 Section 19. There shall be a single tuition waiver program administered by the council in
2 accordance with guidelines established by the council to govern the program, provided that no
3 tuition waiver be funded by the transfer of funds appropriated pursuant to section sixteen.

4 Such guidelines (i) shall establish institutional waiver allocation formulas and eligibility
5 requirements, including needs criteria, for designated waiver programs, (ii) shall provide full or
6 partial tuition waivers for specific categories of students designated by the council which may
7 include veterans, armed forces personnel, senior citizens, and graduate students, (iii) may
8 provide full or partial waivers for additional categories of students not included in clause (ii), and
9 (iv) may provide full or partial waivers of tuition or fees for undergraduate programs, summer
10 sessions, evening classes, or any specific courses or set of courses.

11 Such guidelines shall provide tuition and fee waivers for Massachusetts National Guard
12 members. The commonwealth, not the institutions of public higher education, shall bear the cost
13 of such tuition and fee waivers for Massachusetts National Guard members.

14 Tuition waivers for graduate students shall be administered by each institution of public higher
15 education. Said institutions shall annually and on a date specified by the council submit a written
16 report to the board detailing graduate student waiver policies and distributions of said waivers.

17 Upon the adoption of guidelines in accordance with the provisions of this section the council
18 shall file copies of thereof with the clerks of the house and the senate, who shall refer such
19 guidelines to the house and senate committees on ways and means and the joint committee on
20 education, arts and humanities.

21 The council shall annually on or before March fifteenth report to the house and senate
22 committees on ways and means and to the joint committee on education, arts and humanities
23 regarding any modifications to the guidelines setting forth tuition waiver programs. Said report
24 shall include information relative to tuition waivers for graduate students as administered by the
25 several institutions of public higher education.

26 Notwithstanding the provisions of any general or special law to the contrary, the board of higher
27 education shall provide full tuition waivers at each community college for students who are
28 clients of and who meet the eligibility requirements of the Massachusetts rehabilitation
29 commission or the Massachusetts commission for the blind.

30 Notwithstanding the provisions of any general or special law to the contrary, the board of higher
31 education shall provide full tuition waivers for any state-supported course offered by an
32 institution at a public college or university, excluding graduate courses and courses in the MD
33 program at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center, and including courses toward an
34 undergraduate degree program, certificate program, short-term certificate program and noncredit
35 courses at each community college, state college and undergraduate campus of the University of
36 Massachusetts for students who are not over the age of 24 and who, while in the custody of the
37 department of social services, were adopted by an eligible Massachusetts resident or
38 commonwealth employee as determined by the department of social services in conjunction with
39 the human resources division.

40 The board of higher education shall, subject to appropriation, establish a program to provide
41 grants to residents of the commonwealth who are working as paraprofessionals in public schools
42 of the commonwealth while pursuing a bachelor's degree at a public college or university in the
43 commonwealth in order to become a certified teacher in the commonwealth. Eligibility shall be
44 limited to persons (a) who have worked as a paraprofessional in the public schools of the
45 commonwealth for a minimum period of 2 years before receipt of such grant, or who are
46 paraprofessionals who have worked in public schools for a lesser time, and (b) who are enrolled
47 in and pursuing courses of study that will lead to certification as a teacher in bilingual education,
48 special education, math, science or foreign languages, and (c) who commit to teach and actually
49 teach for such period as the board of higher education may determine in the public schools of the
50 commonwealth upon graduation and certification under section 38G of chapter 71. The board of
51 higher education shall establish guidelines governing implementation of the program. Such
52 guidelines shall include, but not be limited to, the following: (i) the level of academic
53 achievement grant recipients must maintain while participating in the grant program; (ii) the
54 financial responsibilities of grant recipients should they fail to complete their teacher
55 certification; and (iii) the duties and obligations of grant recipients upon completion of
56 certification, including the minimum number of years that they shall be required to work as a

57 teacher in a public school of the commonwealth. Such grants shall be used to defray the cost of
58 tuition and fees at a public college or university in the commonwealth.

59 Notwithstanding the provisions of any general or special law to the contrary, the board of higher
60 education shall provide full tuition waivers for any state-supported course offered by an
61 institution at a public college or university, including courses toward an undergraduate degree
62 program, certificate program, short-term certificate program and noncredit courses at each
63 community college, state college and undergraduate campus of the University of Massachusetts,
64 for all professional firefighters employed full-time in the Commonwealth, by a municipality or
65 by a federal agency, and their spouses and dependents.